THE EVENING STAR.
With Sunday Morning Edition.

WASHINGTON.
WEDNESDAY.....April 21, 1909

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Entered as second-class mail matter at the post office at Washington, D. C.

THE STAR has a regular and permanent Family Circulation much more than the combined circulation of the other Washington dailies. As a News and Advertising Medium it has no competitor.

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The Spirit of Civil Service.

In rejecting the report of the conferees on the census bill the Senate yesterday threw back to its original status the McCumber amendment requiring all applicants for civil service appointment to have resided for one year within the states in which they claim residence. The debate on the motion to reject tended to broaden the issue materially. Senator McCumber based his remarks in support of his own motion in large part on editorials printed in The Star, and laid down the general proposition that the present practice of District people acquiring residence in the states is contrary to the "spirit of the civil service law." So much was said about the "spirit" of this law that it is easy to believe that Senator McCumber's concept of that spirit is that public place is no other than patronage or spoils, and that the states have certain definite rights in the distribution of the positions. In direct colloquy with Senator Tillman, he sought to call the latter's attention "to the fact that all the states are absolutely deprived of their rights under the working of the civil service law." It is interesting to note further, in the analysis of the McCumber theory of civil service and government working, the following passage from this same speech:

"Every senator here knows that the states have been robbed of apportionment under the operation of this law, and the way they have been robbed is by a claim of a legal residence where no residence was actually obtained or had ever been obtained by the applicants. Many young men throughout the several states of the Union are anxious to come to this city and work for a few years in government service, and then, after getting an education at the night schools, to return to the states from which they came. That opportunity ought not to be denied them. That opportunity is denied them."

In other words, the United States government is to serve as a training school for the youth of the states. The government is not to build up a substantial, permanent, efficient corps of workers by securing through competition the best available people who can be found anywhere by a selection from all comers, but is to take from here and there according to geographical lines and, it is reasonably to be suspected, with due regard for political pressure and influence, an assortment of young men who are to be given the opportunity to educate themselves at the government's expense in order to return after a few years to their original homes and go into business or one of the professions. If this is the "spirit of the civil service law" the entire public service system should be arranged in accordance, and premiums should be offered in the form of rapid promotions, for the encouragement of early resignation in order to maintain a constant current of change.

Senator McCumber, speaking of the fact that in some families two or three members are employed in the government service, said that "as a matter of fact this is growing to be a city of official families holding positions under the government." Equally as a matter of fact this should by no means be detrimental to the government's interests. It is impossible to see how harm could be done to the federal service through the concentration of employment here in Washington, regardless of family lines. Indeed, the whole matter now turns, in the light of this debate in the Senate, upon the single question of whether the United States is maintaining a civil service for the benefit of a few of the people through their employment or the civil service is maintained for the benefit of the government.

The true spirit of the civil service law has heretofore been understood by the stanchest friends of the merit system to be to give the government of the United States the best possible clerical equipment, and to this end it has always been supposed that the civil service commission should seek, as far as the illogical apportionment of offices law would permit, to fill the vacancies with the most capable men and women obtainable after searching examination, regardless of geography and place of residence.

If the merit system is simply a means to the end of giving places to the states as patronage, Congress should now go on record definitely to this effect. If, on the other hand, the merit system is to be maintained as a means of giving the United States the best possible force for the transaction of its business, Congress should repeal the apportionment of offices law, free the hands of the civil service commission and insure the selection of the most eligible. It has that opportunity, now that the Senate has returned the bill to conference.

Mr. Burbank is one of the people who manage to cultivate the soil to advantage without waiting for uplift advice.

"Artist" Earle continues to break into celebrity for reasons that have nothing whatever to do with art.

The New York Mayoralty.

William F. Sheehan, who served one term as lieutenant governor of New York, now an attorney with a large corporation practice, and in good standing with the democratic organization at home, says in an interview:

"If the right kind of a democrat is nominated for mayor of New York city and elected this fall, who knows but that he may become the presidential candidate of his party in 1912?"

Sure enough, who knows? "The right kind of a democrat" in the mayor's office might be advanced to the governor's office, and then, repeating the Cleveland history, he might be nominated for President in 1912.

But what is Mr. Sheehan's idea about "the right kind of a democrat"? A man willing to accept a Tammany nomination and in office to play Tammany's game? Could such a man be advanced to the governorship, and then to the presidency? It is to be doubted if the country would accept for President anybody owing his rise in affairs to such influences?

We all know what would happen to a man who should accept the mayoralty at Tammany's hands and then refuse to obey Tammany's orders. Look at Mr. McClellan. A very promising and deserving young democrat, whose friends a few years ago saw him in their mind's eye headed for the White House by the way of Albany. But he failed to reach even Albany. After accepting a second term as mayor at Tammany's hands he broke with Leader Murphy, and since then has been without influence in democratic circles. He seems to be booked for private life, and a long sojourn there. Shall, indeed, we ever more behold him a leader among the leaders again?

This is the list of those most prominently mentioned in connection with the democratic mayoralty nomination:

"Former Supreme Court Justice Morgan J. O'Brien.
"Former Corporation Counsel William B. Ellison.
"Controller Metz.
"Former Controller Grout.
"Nathan Straus.
"Supreme Court Justice Victor J. Dowling, whose term on the bench expires December 31, 1918.
"Supreme Court Justice Edward E. McCall, whose term expires December 31, 1916.
"Supreme Court Justice James A. O'Gorman, whose term expires December 31, 1913.
"Supreme Court Justice James W. Gerard, whose term expires December 31, 1921.
"Supreme Court Justice William J. Gaynor of Brooklyn, whose term expires December 31, 1921.
"Thomas F. Mulry, president of the Emigrant Savings Bank.
"Corporation Counsel Francis K. Pendleton.
"President McGowan of the board of aldermen.
"John A. Bensel, dock commissioner.
"Former Supreme Court Justice David Leventritt."

If any democratic judge in town is omitted it was probably an oversight. Truly, the democratic hope seems to be in the judiciary.

As to the opposition, whether it will be led by a republican or an independent is not as yet clear. So far the most prominent republican mentioned is Seth Low, an excellent man, but handicapped by a defeat after a term as mayor, and lacking in some of the elements of popularity. He is not an office seeker, and should he be nominated the honor will rest on his record as a public-spirited citizen and his deserts as a man.

Vine Day.

Next Friday will be "vine day" in the District public schools. The children will plant vines in the school yards, along fences and walls, and at other points where there is a chance to soften an ugly outline or to add to the picturesqueness of the scene. But not only in the school yards will the effect of "vine day" be felt, if the hopes of the teachers who are working in this field of endeavor are fulfilled. Vines should be planted on Friday in every yard in the District, to the end of hiding some irremovable affront to the eye, or increasing the attractiveness of the premises.

This is one of the easiest and cheapest means of making Washington a beautiful city. Annual vines are quick growers and spread far. The morning-glory, sweet pea, the moon-flower and the cypress are hardy and effective. They can be utilized as temporary coverings while the slower perennials are developing, such as the clematis, wistaria, honeysuckle and ivy. They are inexpensive and require little care, and when good seed is used and some pains is taken with the soil and trellis they are highly ornamental.

Washington still has many ugly spots, despite all the work that has been done to clear away unsightly conditions. Front and back fences remain to mar the view. These can be covered quickly each spring with concealing vines. In back yards the garbage and ash cans may be hidden from sight. With a very little trouble and at a trifling expense light arbors can be erected and canopied with flowering vines, and hideous alley gates transformed into archways of artistic appearance. A single dollar intelligently expended may turn a bare, unsightly yard into a place of real beauty.

The school garden work of the past few years has not only given the school buildings themselves more attractive surroundings, but it has been the means of developing in the children a sense of proprietorship in the growing things, and of inspiring an embryonic civic spirit that promises well for the Washington of a few years hence. It is impossible to estimate the benefits which the city has gained from this work, modestly started, and for a season or two conducted under discouraging difficulties, but loyally persisted in by the teachers until it has come to be recognized as one of the important branches of school work. The direction of the children's attention on a certain day to the importance of the vine as a means of improvement is in the line of wholesome education, and every adult in the District should emulate the example which the youngsters will set day after tomorrow.

Harriman.

And the railroads still pursue him. Mr. Harriman, not in robust health, having failed to find rest at home is going abroad in quest of it. Thus does extraordinary success impose its penalty. The Wizard of the Rail has made his burden so great he finds it difficult to bear it. In America anywhere he is in easy reach of the telegraph and the locomotive, and his associates in business, valuing his counsels, will not spare him. But abroad he will be able to "hide out," and free himself from care. His destination is Europe. It seems unlikely that he will push on to Africa.

Richard Croker once said he did not object to fights within an organization, as they aroused interest. That view is entirely comfortable for the man who can be both manager and referee.

There is natural objection to taking chances on placing the government in a position where it may have to cut down salaries to avoid running at a loss.

Collector Loeb will show no mercy to smugglers. He is now in a position where he can listen to explanations from other people.

A scientist estimates that it will cost $10,000,000 to communicate with Mars. This makes cable rates seem comparatively low.

Nelson W. Aldrich.

The announcement that Mr. Aldrich of Rhode Island is serving his last term in the Senate is of general interest. He is one of the strong men of that body, and has figured prominently in the financial and tariff debates of the past quarter century. Of business training, he has addressed himself as senator to business questions, and treated them in a business-like way.

The speech of yesterday is a fair sample of Mr. Aldrich's powers. Without ornament of any kind, it goes to the point in the most direct way, argument calling for statistics, and statistics supporting argument, from first to last.

Mr. Aldrich is of the order of legislator so highly praised by the late Thomas B. Reed. He relies upon debate, properly so-called. A set speech is a rarity with him. As a rule, he neither makes them, nor listens to those made by others. The refinements of lawyers are lost on him. He probably would not know the general welfare clause of the Constitution if he were to meet it in the road with a tag on it. But he knows the business ends of business propositions thoroughly, and states a business case with unusual force. His superior in that particular is not to be found in either house of Congress.

Two years remain of Mr. Aldrich's term. Part of the time he will devote to a canvass of the country in favor of new currency legislation—a subject he has investigated and has much to heart. He will address bankers and representative commercial bodies, and, while expressing his own views, solicit theirs. Before drafting a bill and committing himself to it, he wants all available information on the subject.

This trip will bring Mr. Aldrich into closer touch with the country than he has ever been. Never a stumper, he has had nothing to do with the showy side of campaigning, and personally, therefore, is a stranger in all the territory off the upper Atlantic seaboard. In those sections he has been known as a man who did things in Washington, but found no time and had no taste for knocking around and shaking hands.

Rhode Island will find it difficult to fill his place, if, indeed, the thing is possible. As a hive of human industry, a manufacturing state of varied productions, she has need in both houses of Congress of representatives familiar with her activities and resources, and alive to her interests in the making of tariffs. In equipment for this work Mr. Aldrich has "held over" any man his state has sent to Congress in many years, and has come to lead the Senate on the subject. The present battle promises to develop all of his tactics, and emphasize to his constituents the value of the man they are soon to lose. His service of thirty years in the Senate will fill a big place in the history of the little commonwealth.

The physicians who are puzzled to know how an Ohio man lived without a brain should be reminded that the subject of their investigation was not an Ohio politician.

The Sultan of Turkey finds no personal satisfaction in being the central figure in the first real fight Europe has produced in a long time.

Time will show whether the announcement that Jeffries will fight Johnson means a physical encounter or more conversation.

Mr. Hearst manages to give the Independence League now and then enough of a lift to encourage people who may have correspondence for sale.

At times Castro must feel as worried as the small boy on the wrong side of the fence while a ball game is going on.

A man in Mr. Sereno Payne's position must be far superior to pride of authorship.

By going to Europe Mr. Harriman hopes to find real rest. It depends on where he goes.

SHOOTING STARS.

BY PHILANDER JOHNSON:

His Prophetic Soul.

"Hamlet was a man of intensely melancholy moods," remarked the student.

"Yes," answered Mr. Stormington Barnes. "Perhaps he foresaw some of the interpretations of his character that my professional rivals have been giving."

A Distinction.

"Biggins is a wonderfully good-natured man."

"I don't know that he is especially good-natured," answered Miss Cayenne. "He merely lacks the mental perception requisite to let him know when it is time for his feelings to be hurt."

April.

The balmy breeze, the tuneful bird,
In poetry are fine;
But still the vernal call is heard,
"Please pass me the quinine."

Correspondence.

"Do many of your constituents write to you for appointments?"

"Well," answered Senator Sorghum, "they think they are, but most of them are writing for disappointments."

Personally Concerned.

The Egyptian stood trembling outside the gates.

"What's the matter?" asked the palace guard.

"I understand that Cleopatra has just had another messenger flogged for bringing unwelcome news."

"Yes."

"This is the first of the month. Bills of every kind are coming due."

"What's that to you?"

"I'm the postman."

The Amateur Gardener.

I've planted the peas in the rose bed,
I've set out some slips in the sun;
I'm wondering now with a care-furrowed brow
What the job will be like when it's done.
The names that are written in Latin
I've studied with scrupulous care;
I've mixed up the seeds of all kinds of breeds
And scattered 'em everywhere!

The scheme will work out, beyond question,
In a highly original way;
The humble stringbean side by side will be seen
With the pink and the poppy so gay.
But I tremble to think of the finish
As over the garden I gaze.
Will they call me to eat the petunias so sweet
While tomato plants stand in a vase?

Opportunity in School Work.

From the New York Evening Post.

The school is no longer a mere waiting room for people in search of higher opportunities; it has its own openings, and they are not all in university laboratories. We believe that very few college men realize what they might accomplish, were they to train for school management or for high school teaching. President Eliot spoke in the fullness of wisdom the other evening, when he urged Harvard undergraduates to engage in these lines of work, adding that they are "worthy of an accomplished man of letters, or of science, or a gifted administrator." Some there are who still feign to look down upon the high school teacher or principal, but the prejudice counts only against its cherishers. More than 10,000 high schools are now open; many of them are as large as universities, more prosperous than some, and more advanced than our fathers' colleges were. Signs are abundant, too, that they will one day become, in popular esteem as well as in fact, the center of the American educational system. But even if this does not happen, they will certainly be numerous and strong enough to reward fittingly the man who trains himself for their work.

Notwithstanding.

From the Kansas City Journal.

President Taft's administration seems to be wise and sound thus far, notwithstanding the paucity of Mr. Bryan's criticisms.

White House Cow.

From the Charleston News and Courier.

The establishment of a cow as an attachment to the White House is the one little kindness that President Taft has done the Paragraphers' Union. His mighty predecessor was chief purveyor of raw and meaty material to the union.

Fan Talk.

From the Pittsburg Gazette.

After reading a chapter of base ball language, one wonders why he ever thought Esperanto difficult.

Or Lost.

From the Cleveland Leader.

Think how monotonous base ball would be if one club won all the while.